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AN EXPERIMENTAL COLLEGE IN A MULTI-COLLEGE SYSTEM--THE ROTATION OF ITS FACULTY.

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SINCE SOME FORMS OF EXPERIMENTATION ARE NOT ADAPTABLE TO THE TYPICAL COLLEGE OPERATION, A MULTICOLLEGE SYSTEM, IN ADDITION TO ENCOURAGING INNOVATION AND INSTRUCTIONAL RESEARCH, SHOULD CONTAIN ONE EXPERIMENTAL COLLEGE. WHILE LOCATED ON ONE OF THE DISTRICT'S CAMPUSES, IT WOULD HAVE ITS OWN FACILITY AND ADMINISTRATIVE INDEPENDENCE. A DISTRICT VENTURE, IT WOULD RECEIVE FACULTY FROM EACH OF THE OTHER COLLEGES FOR ONE YEAR OR, PREFERABLY, FOR THE DURATION OF THEIR STUDIES. ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE MINIMAL, CONSISTING OF A DEAN AND AN ASSISTANT DEAN, PLUS A RESEARCH SPECIALIST WHO WOULD SERVE ALL COLLEGES IN THE DISTRICT. FACULTY WOULD SUBMIT RESEARCH PROPOSALS TO A REVIEW BOARD, AND APPROVAL OF A PLAN WOULD RESULT IN THE INSTRUCTOR'S ASSIGNMENT TO THE EXPERIMENTAL COLLEGE. THE STUDENT BODY SHOULD ALSO BE ROTATIONAL, THOUGH STUDENTS WOULD, LIKE THE FACULTY, BE REGULARLY ASSIGNED TO ANOTHER COLLEGE. BECAUSE OF EQUIPMENT AND FACILITY PROBLEMS, MOST OF THE WORK WOULD BE IN ACADEMIC FIELDS. SUCH A PLAN WOULD INTEGRATE THE EXPERIMENTAL COLLEGE WITH THE OTHERS IN A SYSTEM, ENCOURAGE EXPERIMENTATION, AND HELP TO RESIST INTERINSTITUTIONAL COMPETITION IN THE AREA OF INNOVATION. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE EXPERIMENTAL JUNIOR COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES, JULY 12, 1967). (WO)

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THE ROTATION OF ITS FACULTY

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AN EXPERIMENTAL COLLEGE IN A MULTI-COLLEGE SYSTEM:

THE ROTATION OF ITS FACULTY

In extended, populous, urban areas junior college districts tend to operate as multi-campus or multi-college systems. Assuming that the district administration of such a multi-college operation hopes to encourage experimental approaches to curriculum and instruction, the problem then becomes how much experimentalism and where will this experimentation take place. Should one college of the system be set aside as THE EXPERIMENTAL COLLEGE or should experimentation be advanced at all the colleges of the system?

The thesis of this paper is that the decision is not one of either-or; if experimentalism has district support, that is, the backing of the central administration, it should be in evidence at every college of the system. While most efforts with new instructional methods or curriculum design can be carried out within an existing institutional framework, it is recognized that some forms of experimentation might not be able to adapt to or co-exist with the routine college operation. An innovative approach in student programming might require a different administrative structure or a separate facility in which to function. Therefore, it is suggested that a multi-college complex, in addition to fostering a positive attitude toward innovation and instructional research at each local college, should contain an experimental college.

The uniqueness of this experimental college would stem from its being a part of every other college in the system. Although it would have its own facility, it would not have its own faculty, and, by not having its own instructors, it would involve all the other colleges.

The following, although not necessarily in order of importance, are the pertinent points in such a plan:

1. LOCATION

An experimental college should be established on one of the campuses of the district. This college would not be attached in an administrative sense to the college whose campus it shares. It would merely occupy a portion of the campus, because it must be located somewhere and such sharing would avoid duplication of certain expensive facilities. The experimental college should be a district venture and represent all the colleges of the system.

2. STAFFING

Staff enthusiasm for new ideas is basic to maintaining an atmosphere receptive to experimental planning and evaluation. To insure continued enthusiasm, stagnation

must be avoided. It is, therefore, suggested that the faculty of the experimental college be rotated every year, or, for greater flexibility, that each staff member's stay at the experimental college last until his particular study is completed. This would generally vary from one to two years--although a year would probably be the most typical period of residence. In each field where an experiment is in process, the staff would consist of one representative from each of the colleges of the system. If there are four colleges in operation, there would be four English teachers at the experimental college, and these four instructors would remain at the experimental college for the duration of their investigation.

In order to insure some staff continuity, perhaps it would be better to initiate new programs for the experimental college at different times during the academic year. Some faculty might remain at the college from June to June and others might enter at the winter break.

3. ADMINISTRATION

To maintain freedom in this program, line and staff delineations should be kept to a minimum. This college should not have department heads and/or divisional chairmen. The entire administrative hierarchy should consist of two people--the Dean or Director of the experimental college and the Assistant Dean or Assistant Director. These two people should be involved actively in the experimental process. Rather than numbers of supervisors and administrators, this college would need strong logistic support in the area of secretarial and clerical help.

The Director of the experimental college would report to the District Administration in accordance with the procedures set forth for the chief administrators of the other colleges. The Director of the experimental college would relate to the heads of the other colleges not only as far as the total organizational structure is concerned, but in a stronger sense, since he would be using their faculty. The results of experimentation would be disseminated to the chief administrator of each of the other colleges who would then proceed to institute those procedures which suited the needs of his particular college.

4. RESEARCH

A third person on the administrative level who should be attached to this experimental college (at the same time serving all the other colleges) would be a research specialist, whose job would be to aid in establishing the experimental designs, structure evaluative procedures, and compile the results. This individual would be a member of the central administrative office and would supervise an annual publication summarizing the research studies of the entire district. This approach tends to take the suggested projects out of the realm of innovation and forces experimental review. It is to be stressed that this publication would present not only the studies of the experimental college but also those of the other colleges of the district.

5. FACULTY AND RESEARCH SELECTION

Instructors at the several colleges would submit experimental plans to the

Director of the experimental college who would review the various proposals with the Assistant Director and the research specialist. This review board would then make recommendations to the heads of the other colleges regarding which experiments they deemed most feasible for the coming year. The heads of the other colleges and the review board would serve as a joint committee in submitting the list of proposed experiments for district approval. Upon obtaining this approval, the instructors whose plans were selected would then be notified that they would be at the experimental college the following year.

If only one experiment is selected in a subject-area; e.g., science, then the science faculties of the other colleges would be notified of the proposed project. From those who demonstrated interest in this particular study, one from each college would be invited to participate at the experimental college the forthcoming year. Faculty participation at the experimental college, then, would result from one of two procedures--the instructor submitting an experimental plan or the instructor evidencing interest in an experiment which had been proposed and accepted.

Each faculty member at the experimental college would remain in the catalog of his respective college with some designation next to his name indicating his period of residence at the experimental college. In addition to providing a vehicle for research and an in-service program for faculty growth and development, such a plan does contain something of a built-in sabbatical leave. The change in surroundings, new contacts, and different procedures and contents should afford much stimulation to the staff while the entire district benefits from their efforts.

6. ENCOURAGEMENT OF INNOVATION

This college should serve as a spur to the other colleges in the district, since at any given moment each college would have representatives at the experimental college, as well as staff members who have just returned and those who anticipate going in the future. This college would not kill experimentation on the other campuses because it would reserve for itself experiments that would be too costly, time consuming, or functionally disruptive if carried out at one of the regular colleges. Furthermore, the follow-through of many of these experiments would probably take place at the regular colleges.

7. SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Since the faculty of the experimental college would be on a rotational basis, it is recommended that the student body have a similar arrangement. Students would enroll at the experimental college for either one or two semesters and during that time would be required to take all their course work at the experimental college. The students would have access to counselors at the experimental college, since the guidance divisions would also want to test new approaches and would rotate like the faculty. In this way a greater control could be exercised over the various experiments in progress.

Just as the faculty would remain identified with one of the regular colleges of the system, so would the students. Graduation would always be from one of these

colleges and registration also would take place at the college of the student's choice rather than at the experimental college.

The experimental college would draw from each of the colleges of the system for its student population just as it does for its faculty. If there were four colleges in operation, then perhaps one hundred students from each of these colleges would be at the experimental college. In a seven-college system, such as is planned for Dallas, Texas, this would mean that the experimental college would have a maximum enrollment of 700 students. Since the various experiments in instructional methods would involve all student levels, the student body should consist of remedial students, average students, and honor students, and should draw from the different academic and occupational programs. Perhaps the best method for choosing students would be one similar to that utilized in faculty selection--call for volunteers and from these volunteers pick a stratified sample.

8. THE CURRICULUM

In a comprehensive community college the problem of selecting students for experimental programs to be held in a separate facility raises a question about the vocational area where specialized and expensive equipment often is required. It is recognized that a student majoring in data processing would not be able to take certain computer courses at the experimental college; this also would be true for electronics and like subjects. On the other hand, many technical/occupational courses involve relatively inexpensive mobile equipment and do not have to be limited to one or two colleges: business subjects (typing and shorthand) and drafting are cases in point. Students in programs that involve work-study; for example, mid-management and office supervision, could easily take all their course work at the experimental college and continue their outside work experience.

Most of the work at the experimental college would be in the area of academic subjects; however, technical/occupational students also take academic subjects, such as communications, social science, natural science, etc. Some adjustment in scheduling would permit most students in occupational programs which require specialized equipment to take one semester at the experimental college. Course work during that semester could be limited to subjects which do not involve elaborate apparatus.

The essence of this plan is that it does not limit experimentation to the confines of on-going, organized institutions which might tend to discourage what is difficult or disruptive to implement, nor does it relegate all innovation in a multi-campus system to one college which then becomes the district's experimental showcase. The rotational aspect keeps the experimental college an integral part of all the other colleges, and its accomplishments, through the shared faculty, would reflect upon all the institutions of the district.

If a district expects to grant a high degree of autonomy to each college and to

encourage each to make its unique contribution, this will likely result in competition among the colleges (healthy or otherwise). A cooperative effort at the experimental college should counterbalance this competitive attitude, facilitate an exchange of information beneficial to all students of the district, and serve as a uniting factor beyond that created by a central administrative body for overall management.